

## Message Text

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51  
ACTION SS-30

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CCO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 DODE-00 CIAE-00

USSS-00 INRE-00 NSAE-00 /031 W  
----- 087364

R 261025Z OCT 73  
FM USINT CAIRO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4116  
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN  
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT  
AMEMBASSY JIDDA  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
USMISSION USUN

S E C R E T CAIRO 3243

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MOPS EG IS  
SUBJECT: SOVIET VIEW ON CAUSES AND TIMING OF EGYPTIAN  
DECISION TO RESUME HOSTILITIES

1. DEPUTY TASS DIRECTOR LEO YEDRASHNIKOV, A SUSPECTED RIS  
OFFICER, HAS TOLD US THAT SADAT MADE DECISION TO OPEN  
HOSTILITIES WITH ISRAEL IN EARLY AUGUST. YEDRASHNIKOV  
SAID SOVIETS HAD VERY CAREFULLY CHECKED THEIR OWN RECORDS  
TO DETERMINE ACTUAL DATE OF DECISION. HE SAID THAT SOVIET  
EMBASSY IN CAIRO HAD RECEIVED SOME INDICATIONS IN AUGUST  
AND SEPTEMBER THAT SADAT WAS PREPARING FOR ANOTHER FIGHT,  
BUT WERE NOT ABLE TO DRAW THESE TOGETHER INTO  
COHERENT PICTURE UNTIL THE END OF SEPTEMBER. MOREOVER,  
SOVIET EMBASSY HAD NOT BELIEVED THAT RESUMPTION OF FIGHTING  
WAS AT ALL LIKELY.

2. YEDRASHNIKOV SAID THAT, USING 20/20 HINDSIGHT, SOVIETS  
HAD PUT TOGETHER PICTURE OF WHO HAD BEEN INFORMED OF GOE  
DECISION TO RESUME WARFARE. HE STATED THAT FEISAL WAS  
SECRET

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INFORMED OF PLAN RELATIVELY EARLY IN THE GAME. SADAT HAD  
DISCUSSED PLAN WITH HIM DURING HIS VISIT TO JIDDA ON  
AUGUST 23, AND HAD IN FACT BEEN ENCOURAGED BY SAUDI MONARCH.  
HUSSEIN WAS GENERALLY AWARE THAT EGYPT WAS PREPARING FOR WAR,

BUT WAS NOT INFORMED OF WHEN IT WOULD OCCUR. HE DISCUSSED DECISION WITH SADAT DURING TRIPARTITE MEETINGS IN CAIRO ON SEPTEMBER 10-12 AND WAS ENJOINED TO SILENCE. YEDRASHNIKOV SAID THAT HUSSEIN WAS TAKEN BY SURPRISE ON DAY WAR BROKE OUT, SINCE HE BELIEVED IT WOULD TAKE PLACE LATER.

3. WITHIN THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT, SECRET WAS HELD VERY TIGHTLY AMONG SMALL GROUP OF ADVISORS SURROUNDING SADAT. THESE WERE WAR MINISTER AHMED ISMAIL, INTERIOR MINISTER SALEM AND ASU FIRST SECRETARY HAFIZ GHANEM. HEYKAL WAS BROUGHT INTO IT AFTER HE RETURNED TO SADAT'S GRACES AT THE END OF AUGUST. YEDRASHNIKOV SAID THAT HAFIZ ISMAIL WAS OPPOSED TO WAR FROM START; HE WAS STRONGLY PRO-AMERICAN AND BELIEVED THAT POLICY OF RAPPROCHEMENT WITH WEST WAS WORKING IN EGYPT'S FAVOR.

4. ON OCTOBER 5, SADAT HELD FULL CABINET MEETING TO REVEAL THAT ON FOLLOWING DAY EGYPT WOULD GO TO WAR. DURING DISCUSSION WHICH TOOK PLACE, MOST OF THOSE PRESENT APPROVED. VICE-PRESIDENT SHAFI AND HAFIZ ISMAIL WERE OPPOSED. VICE-PRESIDENT FAWZI CONTRIBUTED LITTLE TO THE DISCUSSION.

5. YEDRASHNIKOV CONCLUDED THAT SOVIETS THEMSELVES WERE NOT AWARE OF DANGER OF SITUATION UNTIL END OF SEPTEMBER, AND DID NOT KNOW DEFINITELY THAT SADAT WAS ABOUT TO RESUME WAR UNTIL OCTOBER 3, WHEN VINOGRADOV SAW SADAT.

6. REGARDING CAUSES OF WAR, YEDRASHNIKOV SAID SOVIETS BELIEVED IT TO HAVE BEEN FORCED ON SADAT BY INTERNAL PRESSURES. AMONG THESE WERE WIDESPREAD RESENTMENT AT SHORTAGES AND PRICE INCREASES OF BASIC FOODSTUFFS, FEARS IN GOE OF CONTINUED STUDENT DISTURBANCES WHEN UNIVERSITIES, AND GENERAL MALAISE ABOUT POLITICAL SITUATION. YEDRASHNIKOV ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THESE REASONS SEEMED INSUBSTANTIAL ALMOST TO THE POINT OF WHIMSY, BUT ADDED THERE SEEMED NO OTHER PROXIMATE CAUSE.

SMITH  
SECRET

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SECRET

<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptoning:** Z  
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**TAGS:** PEPR, US, EG  
**To:** STATE INFO AMMAN  
BEIRUT  
JIDDA  
MOSCOW  
TEL AVIV  
USUN  
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